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Joseph Nechvatal

1988

**REORGANIZED MEDITATIONS ON
MNEMONIC THRESHOLD**



Joseph Nechvatal, *virus attaque: mnemonic wonderland* (1992)

Previous cultural forms have been exhausted as self-consciousness has turned into self-enclosure. Self-expression has been eclipsed by a field-network of interaction. So, the next phase in consciousness will only come when all our attachments to the old forms and methods have been obliterated. Everything has become transparent. Information bits flow in a vague whirl while this proliferation, which seems to have no purpose, forms slowly, imperceptibly, bit by bit, into a mass somewhere deep in the gray recesses of the neural context; remnant whispers of a once dominant cultural form. Congealed formation is in a state of information and dismemberment. Fleeting solidity rips out and dissolves form from its old content, providing visions of resolve and improvement over dilemmas left behind. Substanceless collectively reverberates internally, beyond intellect and will, in an inner-external detoxification which breaks pop open and drains mythic consciousness of authenticity. In our media-permeated atmosphere the search is to not repeat what has been learned. The learned form must be cracked open through chaos to make room for other

views. Fast paced dumbness and reactionary codes are made difficult and resistant to bourgeoisieification. The logic of the image, of the whole media society, of postmodernism in general, is satiated in an overabundance and counter-fusion. One goes all the way through and comes out the other side, ecstatic and covered in excrement. This hyper overproduction is the space of refusal today. The only space from which to develop an awareness, a theoretical awareness, of the reification of consciousness. Are we at the beginning of a new metaphor for the system? A Big Bang theory pushing us beyond the vanishing point? A theoretical black hole? The aftermath of the dissolution of form is not a reductive simplification. Rather, an analogy can be drawn to the primordial plenitude, subject-object unity, or Benjamin's dialectical image. The money mushroom cloud is seeking repose; as astonished eyes behold the self-cannibalization of nostalgic fetishism. Distorted ideologies bubble and burp their way to the top of the cesspool. Media adulation, commodity consciousness, technocratic mind set, all collide and cancel each other out in an orgy of fazed media mirages, a mindless bombardment of consumption-consumption, resolving itself in an all-round social awareness. Complete self-consciousness is meta-consciousness. Depth consciousness is formed from the debris of superficiality and fragmentation. New neurological circuits are connected, mutating consciousness. The characteristics of this new neurological mutation are high velocity, multiple choice, relativity, and the fission-fusion of all perceptions into alternate possibilities. From Overload to Overmind.

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M/E/A/N/I/N/G brings together essays and commentary by over a hundred artists, critics, and poets, culled from the art magazine of the same name. The editors-artists Susan Bee and Mira Schor-have selected the liveliest and most provocative pieces from the maverick magazine that bucked commercial gallery interests and media hype during its ten-year tenure (1986-96) to explore visual pleasure with a culturally activist edge. With its emphasis on artists' perspectives of aesthetic and social issues, this anthology provides a unique opportunity to enter into the fray of the most hotly contested art issues of the past few decades: the visibility of women artists, sexuality and the arts, censorship, art world racism, the legacies of modernism, artists as mothers, visual art in the digital age, and the rewards and toils of a lifelong career in art. The stellar cast of contributing artists and art writers includes Nancy Spero, Richard Tuttle, David Humphrey, Thomas McEvilley, Joseph Nechvatal, Laura Cottingham, Johanna Drucker, David Reed, Carolee Schneemann, Whitney Chadwick, Robert Storr, Leon Golub, Charles Bernstein, and Alison Knowles. This compelling and theoretically savvy collection will be of interest to artists, art historians, critics, and a general audience interested in the views of practicing artists.